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Drip Irrigation Helps Farmers Save



Photo: USAID/India/Anita Gursahani

Farmer Jayashankar and his son use the hanging pipe to water their crop of grapes. This drip irrigation method has enabled Jayashankar's son to attend college as he is no longer needed to water the fields.

Krishnappa is a small farmer in a rural district of the south Indian state of Karnataka. He received assistance from a USAID-supported program to switch 3.25 acres of his 6.5 acre plot from flood irrigation to drip irrigation. This improvement reduced the use of his electric water pump from 84 hours to 25 hours a week.

Thrilled with his savings on energy, water and labor costs, Krishnappa convinced other farmers to follow suit. Govindraj, another farmer, said, "Time and money saved because of drip irrigation has helped me grow

additional crops and increased my income." With this additional income, Govindraj's wife bought two cows and now manages a dairy microenterprise. She can also spend more time with her children.

Jayashankar, another proud farmer, can now send his son to college for higher education as he is no longer needed for watering the fields. Naras Amma, a female farmer, changed her 12.5 horsepower pump set to a 10 horsepower one, and installed drip irrigation on four acres of land. The new pump set works even with low voltage electricity and has reduced pumping hours from 56 to 14 per week. Naras has invested the savings in power, water and labor in growing cabbages and other vegetables, and providing financial support to her extended family.

These and other farmers benefited from USAID's efforts to optimize water and energy consumption for farming groundwater-irrigated agricultural land in Karnataka. The project helped local farming communities develop appropriate solutions for groundwater and energy problems, improve pumping systems, and install low cost drip irrigation.